

1792A  
EA-03-01  
5401  
E-02-133  
Nelson Way

**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE**

**DECISION RECORD and FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
Nelson Way Commercial Thinning  
Environmental Assessment No. OR090-EA-03-01  
Sale Tract No. E-02-133**

**BACKGROUND**

The Bureau of Land Management prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) which analyzed the effects of this Proposed Action and alternatives. The EA and a preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were made available for public comment in May, 2003. One public comment was received.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (OR090-EA-03-01), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl," (April 1994) and the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (June 1995); (2) the Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action and alternatives do not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

**DECISION**

It is my decision to select the Proposed Action as described in the Nelson Way Commercial Thinning EA. This EA and the FONSI analyzed the selected alternative and found no significant impacts.

Implementation of this decision will result in forest management activities including thinning of Matrix and Riparian Reserve by commercial timber harvest, and road construction and decommissioning within the Matrix. All design features identified in the EA (pp. 2-4) will be implemented.

The selected alternative is in conformance with the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl," (NSO ROD, April 1994), and the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (RMP, June 1995), as amended by the "Record of Decision for Amendments to

the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines," (January 2001).

## **ALTERNATIVES**

In addition to the selected alternative, the EA considered three other alternatives in detail (EA, pp. 2-5). Alternative 1 would be similar to the Proposed Action except that there would be no road construction. Alternative 2 would be similar to the Proposed Action except that Spur B would be built instead of Spur A, and there would be ground-based yarding. Alternative 3 is the "no action" alternative and would involve no management activities.

## **RATIONALE FOR SELECTION**

The purpose of the action in the Matrix is to provide forest products while maintaining or enhancing the productivity, sustainability, and diversity of the forest ecosystem. The Proposed Action and Alternatives 1 and 2 would meet this purpose of the action. The purpose of the action in the Riparian Reserves is to accelerate the attainment of ACS objectives. The Proposed Action and Alternatives 1 and 2 would meet this purpose.

The Proposed Action would most effectively meet the purpose of the action. It would provide forest products by commercial thinning. It would enhance ecosystem diversity by treating the Riparian Reserves, and it would maintain long-term productivity through implementation of project design features.

Based on the analysis discussed and presented in the EA, the Proposed Action is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy and the objectives for the Riparian Reserves, and would not prevent or retard attainment of any of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives (EA, pp. 10-12). Silvicultural practices in the Riparian Reserves will help accelerate acquisition of desired vegetation characteristics needed to attain ACS objectives (EA, p. 10).

The Proposed Action and Alternatives 1 and 2 would degrade dispersal habitat for spotted owls on a local, short-term basis (EA, pp. 12-13). Alternative 1 would degrade fewer acres of dispersal habitat but would provide less timber. Alternative 2 would have the same effects on spotted owl dispersal habitat and would provide approximately the same amount of timber as the Proposed Action.

No suitable marbled murrelet habitat exists within the harvest area, but one old-growth Douglas-fir does exist within 0.25 mile of the project area. Consequently, there may be a noise disturbance effect on unsurveyed marbled murrelet habitat.

Of all the action alternatives, Alternative 1 would least affect soil productivity because fewer acres would be harvested (EA, pp. 14-15). However, of all the action alternatives, Alternative 1 provides the least amount of timber. Alternative 2 would most affect soil productivity because there would be compaction effects due to ground-based yarding (EA, pp. 14-15). The Proposed Action would have slightly less of an effect than Alternative 2 (EA pp. 14-15) and would provide the same amount of timber.

Alternative 3 (no action) would not meet the purpose of the action within the Matrix or Riparian Reserves. Alternative 3 would provide no timber. Alternative 3 would result in slower development of late-successional forest structural characteristics than the Proposed Action and Alternatives 1 and 2 (EA, p. 12). Alternative 3 would have no immediate effects on wildlife habitat (EA, p. 13) and would have no effect on soil productivity (EA, p. 15).

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

A public notice advertising the availability of the EA and FONSI appeared in the Eugene Register-Guard on April 9, 2003. Additionally, the EA and FONSI were mailed to interested individuals and organizations. A 30-day public comment period closed on May 9, 2003. One comment letter was

received. The comments were considered and a response was mailed on June 20, 2003. A copy of the Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact will be mailed to the commentor.

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, consultation was completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which found that the action "May Affect but is Not Likely to Adversely Affect" the northern spotted owl and "May Affect and is Likely to Adversely Affect" the marbled murrelet.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration concurred with BLM through informal consultation that the action is "Not Likely to Adversely Affect" the Oregon Coast salmon.

The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde were notified of this project during the scoping process, requesting information regarding tribal issues or concerns relative to the project. No response was received.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

A timber sale contract will implement the road construction, timber harvest, and decommissioning of roads used for timber harvest operations as described in the Proposed Action (EA, pp. 2-4).

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES**

The decision to implement the timber sale portion of this project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies. In accordance with 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for the timber sale portion of this project will not be subject to protest until the notice of sale is first published in the Eugene Register-Guard on August 27, 2003. This published notice of sale will constitute the decision document for the purpose of protests of the timber sale portion of this project. 43 CFR 5003.2(b) Protests of the timber sale portion of this decision must be filed with this office within fifteen (15) days after first publication of the notice of sale.

/s/ Steven Calish  
Steven Calish  
Field Manager

Date: 8/26/03